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Many articles appearing in *News and Notes* are not intended to be final; in fact, most of them are exploratory and suggestive and the news items are transient in character, but the annoying question, "Now where did I see that?", is becoming more annoying to us and many readers; so, beginning with the September number, an index will be prepared.

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTPELIER, VERMONT.

Leon S. Gay, President; Dr. Arthur W. Peach, Director and Editor,

Mrs. Louise E. Koier, Associate Editor.

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VHS *News and Notes*

State Library and Supreme Court Building

Home of the

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Montpelier, Vermont

OUR STORY OF THE MONTH

A Matter of Logic

Very few "sexton yarns" survive in Vermont, probably because the traditional sense of gentleness and consideration in the face of sickness and death usually silences the telling of amusing incidents that are bound to occur. However, here is one that has to do with a sexton who had a bad temper and a stutter.

The standard price for digging a grave was \$1. When the wife of a local citizen died—a woman of large proportions—the sexton charged the widower \$1.50. The widower refused to pay the extra fifty cents. Thereupon, the sexton blew up as follows: "Dod hh rot it, hh you'll pay me hh the dol'r'n half hh er out hh the old woman hh comes! . . . Yes, I do hh dig graves hh for a dol'r, but hh not hh — a cellar!"

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VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY • MONTPELIER, VERMONT

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A Man and a Horse and History

A MAN AND A HORSE AND HISTORY

The impressive statue of Justin Morgan, Vermont's famous stallion, dominates the entrance to the Morgan Horse Farm in Weybridge, Vt. This farm, at one time, carried on under the direction of the Federal Government, is now, by Act of Congress, under the supervision of the University of Vermont for a period of two years with the possibility that the two years may be extended.

A. W. P.

Few American states can be said to have what might be called an animal hero, but without question Justin Morgan has his place with the Allens and other renowned names that are associated with the state's history. The story of the stallion really deserves a chapter in any complete history of the state.

In our so-called "Age of Machines," many of them beautiful and obedient — at least for a time — but all dumb, the horse seems to be temporarily out of the picture, except in wide and forward-looking circles who know the significance of a living thing, often beautiful, as a rule obedient, and never wholly dumb, and, above all, a companion and long a comrade of man.

The biography of Justin Morgan, the horse, has some controversial features, but the outline seems clear. In 1795, a teacher of singing in Randolph, Vt., by name Justin Morgan, journeyed to West Springfield, Mass., to collect a debt. He returned with a three-year-old gelding, and a smaller two-year-old stud which he was unable to sell. Under the training of Joel Goss, a neighbor, it became evident that the "under-sized" horse was an unusual type; he was strong and he was fast. During the year, he proved to be more than a match for favored horses in the region pitted against him. During the years following, he was sold repeatedly, but his first trainer, Mr. Goss, could not forget him, and after extended search, finally located him and bought him. It is Goss who is reported to have said in his later years: "Come to think of it, he's just like us! He's American — that's what he is — American!"

When Justin Morgan, the man, died of consumption in 1798, his name was given to the horse, and it has become one of the great names in American horse-loving circles. Recorded descriptions of the stallion would indicate that he stood about fourteen hands high — four inches is a hand — and weighed about 950

pounds. He was a dark bay, with black mane, legs, and tail; his eyes were dark and prominent but pleasant; while full of "life and go," he was tractable and easily handled.

His descendants seem to have carried on the Morgan's qualities and characteristics. Tough and enduring, they were used — and still are — in Vermont in the heavy work on hill farms, but they have also been proved to be fast on the track and unusually efficient under the saddle. Anyone who has ridden or driven a true Morgan up Vermont hills will begin to believe the horse was created for Vermont hills alone; he simply "digs in" and up he goes.

The references which we have consulted list some interesting items. In the middle nineteenth century Morgans became popular in England and France. Earlier, in 1856, the French king drove a matched pair. During the Civil War, the Morgans were widely used as cavalry mounts, particularly by Vermont cavalrymen. General Sherman's famous mount was a Morgan, and there is a bit of verse that has its own story:

*Be it said in letters both bold
and bright:*

*"Here is the steed that saved the
day*

*By carrying Sherman into the
fight*

*From Winchester, twenty miles
away!*

One fact is clear: wherever the Vermonters went, their Morgans went with them — even to California; and any history of the migration of Vermonters should by right not forget the faithful, little, rugged Morgan who tagged along with them.

He has not been forgotten, of course, even in these machine-befuddled days. The Morgan Horse Club has its headquarters at 90 Broad Street, New York, with F. B. Hills, secretary; and through the interest and with the co-operation of

Dr. Gardner N. Cobb (VHS) and his Memorial Committee members, we have been able to rescue the tombstone of Justin Morgan, the man, from the cemetery in Randolph, Vt., and place it in our State Museum. The inscription reads:

Justin Morgan

Died March 22nd A. D. 1798

in the 51st year of his age.

Also, Justin Morgan, the horse, has not been forgotten. He died in 1821 at the age of thirty-one, death resulting from infection following a kick by another horse. The Morgan Club has erected a monument in his memory on the farm of Mr. Lyford about two miles from the village of Chelsea. There are signposts

guiding visitors to the spot; and, later on, in time for our summer visitors, we will print a map showing the route to it.

One hundred and fifty years and more is a long time as human life goes; and it is an odd commentary on it that generations of Vermonters should come and go and be forgotten, and a small horse, gifted with courage, intelligence, and loyalty to man should be remembered. Probably the reason is simple: he deserved to be remembered by what he gave to man not by what man gave to him.

Note: The Morgan Horse Club publishes an attractive magazine, bi-monthly at \$2.50 a year.

A LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR

Here is a Letter from a Vermont High School Boy—*Dear Sir: I am interested in history and not much in literature, and I want to write for my graduation essay on the history of Vermont business. My father says there is no book on it, that no one knows anything about it, and that you don't either. But I wish you would help me if you can.* J. C. T.

Dear John:

Your father is right on all counts as fathers often are. There should be a book that traces the development of Vermont business from the beginning. If we had one, our businessmen and state leaders would not make many mistakes that they do, for it is a truism that "he who does not know the mistakes of the past will be bound to repeat them."

We are trying to find 100 businessmen in the state who will take out a \$10 membership; and we will use the funds to begin the research work necessary. At present we have only 56, not enough; but we will keep looking for the right men even though a leading businessman of the state wrote us today: "Most busy executives and business institutions give little credence to the value of history." The joke about this is that a strong advertising agency outside the state just wrote in for some historical pictures. Their advertising will take business out of Vermont and away from the "busy executives" who do not see the value of history.

So you see, we here at VHS know, just as your father knows, that there is no history of Vermont business that you can use; nor do I know as much as I

wish I did. However, here is a sketch of business and economic history of the state, and later on a suggestion.

In the early days, Vermont would not have come into being without the courage and vision of men who were not primarily businessmen, but it is also true that they needed the support of early Vermonters who were businessmen—for instance, the owners of sawmills and gristmills. These mills were absolutely essential to the life of a settlement and any area where the pioneers made homes. In your town in 1830 there were 11 mills—all gone now — doing various kinds of work. You might try to trace the history of a few, but you will have difficulty, for your town has no published town history, and you would have to depend largely on old newspapers published at the county seat and on the memories of a few old people, and your Town Clerk.

Here is a brief sketch of the early background. The forests looked to the early pioneers like a mine of wealth; today, we find references in old documents to trees, and plenty of them, four and more feet through the butt. From trees burned pearlash was made and sold; 1000 tons were produced in 1791,

There was little looking-ahead, you see, and the forests of valuable timber began to disappear. Today, fortunately under the lead of Perry H. Merrill, our state forester, his associates, and businessmen and farmers who do know the value of history, headway is being made in conserving and developing our lumber supply. You might for your essay study what happened to the timber in your town, and how it is now.

Then we have the early farmers. They went in for all-around agriculture — suited to a variety of soils and the contours of their farms. They had a few sheep, a small herd of cattle and a few pigs. Some made a specialty of horses, such as the famous Morgans.

But after the forests were cleared away, there came the question of the soil; and then, way back in the early 1800's, the rich forest-humus of the hill farms began to go — and nobody looked ahead.

When the valleys were opened, mill sites became available, hundreds of mills went into action, and small manufacturing plants developed. But the forests had gone and the water with them, and as time went on the little mills went too. In the larger places, however, where water-power was ample, manufacturing continued. At the same time mining began; iron mines were opened, and quarrying of granite, marble, and slate. The early businessmen interested in marble and granite were long-visioned, as any study of those industries shows, and they are still major industries in the state.

One old problem, and it is still one, was to get Vermont products to distant markets. The building of turnpikes helped, and droves of animals, cattle, hogs, even turkeys, were driven even to Boston markets. The old dream of using waterways and canals faded away in early years although Lake Champlain, at one time, carried booming businesses.

As the forests and soil and water-power began to fail, Vermonters turned to wool-raising, and in 1830 the clip sold for \$1,200,000 dollars. Then the competition of western states was too much for the wool growers in the end. Wheat raising looked promising, and the wheat growers were successful for a decade, and then western competition fin-

ished them. When the wool growing and wheat raising had its day, our early Vermonters, coming of an undaunted stock, turned to dairy farming, and again vision on the part of a few leaders has made it a major industry today, the main question being—what lies ahead?

The coming of the railroads looked at one time to be the answer to the troublesome questions of getting to markets. The lumber industry, the quarries, agriculture, the cattle business, and manufacturing were all aided; but the railroad that took Vermont products out brought competing products in; and again the question of getting Vermont products to the markets at a profit in the face of competition was still a problem.

Where Vermonters' inventive genius went to work, however, in the field of mechanical gadgets, a solid base was laid, the new markets opened widely; and where patents are held today, the market is still open. But the old dream of an industrial state like Massachusetts and Connecticut passed from the picture for these reasons: lack of adequate transportation, the distance in many cases from raw materials, competition of other states, and lack of capital.

In recent years, recreation has become one of the major assets of the state, bringing in an income of millions; and if the qualities in the state that bring vacationers in are not destroyed by lack of vision or the desire for too quick dollars at any cost, the new interest should serve Vermont for generations. By the way, your town has not thought about this. Last month, in arriving there at about 11 o'clock, I could not find a place to sleep and had to drive on to the next town. Tell your father about that.

Here is a suggestion for you. In a very rough way, just enough to indicate the forces that have been moving under the surface in Vermont for a long, long time, I have sketched in a bit of Vermont's economic history. Why don't you take your town and study its business history, not trying to cover too large a topic? Are there any natural or other resources in your town, in terms of a long look at the past? How about the history of the mills that came and went? What was the market area around your

town? What has happened to it; can it be developed or widened? How did the products in your town get to market once, how do they now? Can the methods be improved? And what about the recreational and welcome-to-a-stranger business? You may find a hint in some of these questions; and there is one book I can loan you, Wilson's *The Hill Country of Northern New England*, that will help you. It deals with Vermont as a part of New England, but it is a wise book.

It is a good idea for many of you young Vermonters to look back and then look ahead. Older Vermont generations are going, and the day will come when the leadership in Vermont will fall on your generation. Perhaps it will be a great one and mean great days for Vermont. It might be, you know. So best of luck with your essay.

Sincerely,

A. W. P.

HERE'S WHERE YOU ARE!

And Where We Wish More Were. A. W. P.

Mrs. Cora B. Hawes, our statistician and assistant treasurer, quietly laid the map on my desk; and I discovered for the first time just where our members are located. You may be interested in seeing where your fellow-members are; and I have added a brief homily on the theme.

As of October 1, Vermont has 1089 members — far, far too low, it seems to me for a Society over a century old. Something ought to be done about it; and I hereby authorize our Vermont members to gather as many outcasts as they can into the fold. The membership classifications will be found in the back of recent *Quarterlies*.

New York follows with 159, 69 in the city, 90 outside the city. There are several thousand Vermonters in the state and hundreds in the city, and descendants galore. Many have forgotten Vermont, without doubt, but others should return to Mecca even if by way of a membership alone.

Massachusetts comes next with 106 outside the capital and 16 in the city of Boston—thanks to good friends who keep passing on the good word.

Then we have Connecticut with 40—should be more because Connecticut was a key state in creating Vermont; and our praise for Illinois with 31. New Jersey stands by with 30. Washington, D. C., has 29. New Hampshire 29. California 24. Ohio 20. Pennsylvania 21. Florida 15. Maryland, 11 — surprising and pleasing. Michigan 11. Maine 9. Rhode Island 8. Virginia 6. Canada 5.

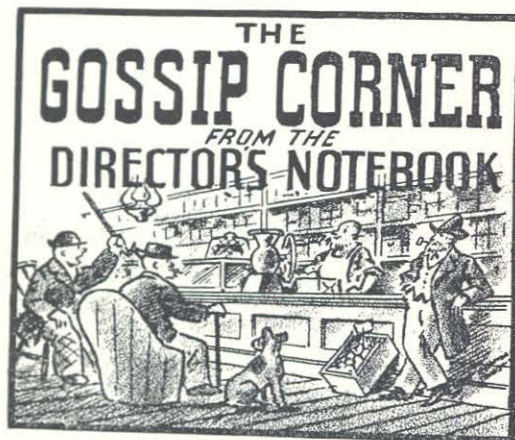
Now comes the homily. We have Indiana with 6, Iowa 5, Wisconsin 4, Minnesota 2, and none in North Dakota and South Dakota. In all of these states, Vermonters were active in laying lasting foundations in religion, government, and education, and many of them in the old days played a leading part in creating these notable states of the West. We are having a study made of the migration of Vermonters to these states. In the meantime, our members who have friends in these states will aid a good cause if they "stir 'em up" a bit. Illinois with 31 members sets the top example.

We have 5 members in Delaware, 5 in North Carolina, 4 in Missouri, 3 in Oregon, 3 in Tennessee, 3 in Washington, 3 in Idaho, 3 in Arizona, 2 in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, 1 in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Montana, South Carolina, and 1 in England and West Germany.

Summing up, we find we have no members in Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and West Virginia. We long to boast that we have at least one member in each state in the Union, and any member who helps us to make the boast possible will receive our blessing—in a day when a blessing will help probably rather than hinder.

And here is one law of the Vermont Medes and the Persians: any name sponsored by a member will be sent an invitation promptly; and if the membership be sent to us directly, that friend named goes immediately into the Inner Circle.

It is also well to remember each \$3.00 active membership will carry 12 of our chatty *News* and *Notes* and 4 scholarly *Vermont Quarterlies* and many an out-of-stater will find news of his forefathers' Vermont home cropping up sooner or later in one of these publications.



The Cracker Barrel Forum is passing in Vermont, but not the tendency of Vermonters wherever they may be to "argify"; and there are plenty of places where they collect in Vermont and elsewhere to do just that, from a country store to a United Nations assembly where Ambassador Warren R. Austin, long a faithful member of VHS, superbly presents the United States points of view with an argument that often seems to have something of the granite strength of his native hills.

I must admit that I am somewhat concerned about the Yankee in the picture above with the raised cane. What our artist, Edward Sanborn (VHS), had in mind I don't know, but my guess is that the cane-wielder is clinching evidence for demolishing the Russians. It may be some time before he gains his end, and his cane must stay up; but when the Russians realize that Russia has more of a stake in peace than we have and become a peaceful part of an international world, that cane is coming down. I hope it will before long.

During the past two months, I have been scampering a bit around the state speaking to Vermont groups on what I call "The Living Past," and finding VHS members leaders in good and lasting causes.

Miss Flora J. Coutts, the executive secretary of the Northeastern Development Association, has organized a fine group in the interests of history in her region; and at the United Church in

Irasburg after enjoying a real country supper — one of the lures that draw me from a busy office — I met some real Vermonters who did not object to my needling them into more activity, for this northeast section has not recorded its history as it should.

In Derby Line, on our northern border, G. Earl Heath (VHS) is a leader in what is called the Intercommunity School, made up of Vermonters and Canadians joining hands across the border in adult education courses. I faced an audience of about 300 and thoroughly enjoyed myself as I hope they did.

In the active town of Morrisville, a distinctive small community because for one reason it has a strong local historical society, I found a highly representative audience of Vermonters and learned more about their history than I could tell them, although I think I "stumped" them with one or two references.

Traveling further south, at Woodstock, the Colonial Dames gave me one of their usual understanding gatherings to talk to; and the staff was cheered to learn a few days later that the Dames had voted \$100 for our library and \$50 toward our recorder.

Speaking this fall at Wilder, Vt., at the guest night, which drew members of women's clubs in the area to the meeting arranged by the Wilder Woman's Club, I gathered in a harvest of new acquaintances and was impressed again with the fact that our women's clubs, more than men's clubs, tend to keep a sense of local history alive.

Vermonters who live afar but would like to get in touch with any of these groups or communities will find me warmly co-operative.

One of the many lasting pleasures in visiting around in Vermont is the stories one reaps. Here is one. A New York writer coming to a Vermont village found he had forgotten his dictionary. He went to the local store and faced the old-timer who had none for sale. Slightly huffy, the writer asked: "Don't you ever use a dictionary?" He ran into this calm answer: "Young man, Vermonters don't use words when they don't know what they mean."



Today, as in days gone by, the stage stops first at the country store.

Gerald H. Carson (VHS), Cave Hill House, Carson Rd., Millerton, N. Y., is writing a book on this subject and would welcome your recollections of "peddlars, drummers, storekeepers, tales of barter goods, collecting old bills, shoplifting."

He also wants to know whether anyone remembers the old McCaskey Ticket Register and the 'accounting system' that went with it.

The other day we had a letter from a little girl in Indiana. After asking the name of the state flower, bird, etc., she inquired, "What language do they speak?"

What is the language of a Vermonter? Here at VHS we hear many voices. But every so often, among the mellow tones of older people, we hear a young Vermonter speaking eagerly and excitedly about the men and events of our past.

There was Corporal Robert Penn. Ever since 1948, when he was stationed in Denver, Cpl. Penn has been trying to convince his comrades that Vermont played a major role in the Civil War.

Last July, after seeing a VHS-sponsored cartoon, "This is Vermont — The Civil War," he wanted to know who said: "Put the Vermonters in front and keep the column well closed up," and also what the population of the state was in the 1860's.

In September he wrote again, this time from Saudi Arabia, amazed that Vermont was so well populated in 1860 and asking where he could purchase a copy of the Revised Roster of Vermont Volunteers published in 1892!

He ended his letter, somewhat apologetically, "I hope I am not bothering you too much in asking all this, but I have always been interested in the past, especially . . . what my home state had to do with it."

We feel that anyone who will uphold the state's honor with such zeal, even in torrid Saudi Arabia, deserves a 3-star VHS decoration.

Midshipman James R. Brickel, Annapolis senior, whose home is in Burlington, is writing a term paper on the construction of Macdonough's fleet for the Battle of Lake Champlain.

Among other things, he wants to study firsthand accounts of conditions in Vermont during the war of 1812; the reasons why Vergennes was chosen as a base for the fleet; more about how the "Saratoga" and the "Eagle" were built. Finding the Naval Academy Library sparsely furnished with source material on his subject, he plans to stop in here during his Christmas holidays.

In his letter of acceptance to our invitation to join the Society, he writes: "It is a tie between anyone away from Vermont, as I will be in the Service, and a chance for the increase of knowledge and the stimulation of interest."

Already some of our VHS friends are sending in gift memberships earmarked Dec. 15, and we recall that Dec. 25 is just around the corner.

This year, lost as we are in the doubts and deceits of a cold war, most material gifts seem poor and meagre. And this is true particularly for those who wonder what it's all about and what we are fighting for.

Perhaps an affirmation of the courage and faith of our pioneer forefathers may supply the vision these questioners need.

Our Christmas catalog of Vermont books is already on its way to you; books that speak of forthright, liberty-loving men and women who built with their suffering and endurance for our inheritance of democracy.

We think they will answer many questions: even the one posed by the little girl from Indiana. For they speak the language of all true Vermonters!

LEMUEL CURTIS

Vermont Clockmaker

Last time we had a query* about Vermont silversmiths. This month it's a Vermont clockmaker, Lemuel Curtis, apprentice of Simeon Willard and one-time resident of Concord, Mass.

Donald K. Packard, (VHS) and a frequent contributor to the well-known magazine *ANTIQUES*, wants to know what Lemuel did after he moved to Burlington, Vt., around 1818.

Presumably he went on making fine banjo, girandole and lyre clocks, but little is known about him down Boston way.

If you have any information about Lemuel Curtis after he went to Vermont or have any data about the clocks he made there, please write to Mr. Donald K. Packard, c/o N. E. Trust Co., 135 Devonshire St., Boston 7, Mass.

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OUR STORY OF THE MONTH*The Biter Bit*

A loyal member of VHS sends us this tale. It seems that a somewhat truculent farmer, named Zed, was annoyed by the white hens that raided his oat piece, said hens belonging to a little old lady, his neighbor. He warned her that there would be trouble unless she kept her hens at home. A few weeks later, he saw the hens again in his oats. He roared to his hired man: "Shoot every hen and lug them down to the old lady!" The deed was done, and with a bouquet of hens in each hand, the hired man went to the house, and yelled: "Come out here and get your hens!"

The door opened a crack; one pale blue eye peered through, and a thin voice shrilled: "I killed my hens a week ago. Them's Zed's own hens!"

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NEWS AND NOTES

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**A UTAH SCENE RE-ENACTED IN VERMONT**

On May 10, 1869, near Promontory Point, Utah, Two Tracks Came Together; and at that Point a Golden Spike was Driven with a Silver Mallet. On October 6, 1951, this Scene was Re-enacted near the Central Vermont Railroad Station in Northfield, Vermont.